MUTINY

A PAPER OF ANARCHISTIC IDEAS AND ACTIONS
#66 JULY/ AUGUST 2012

FREE ZINE!

Debt in the banana republic

Rio +20: Asking hard questions in the marvelous city

Locking down the gates of hell: Lizards' revenge

Income management sux ok?

Globalising resistance to radiation: from Australia to Japan

PLUS film and book review!

ED'S

We're delighted to bring you another issue of Mutiny. The zine is once again overflowing with great articles!

Three pieces examine important environmental struggles happening locally and overseas. Writing from Tokyo, Alexander Brown analyses the state of the nuclear industry in Japan and Australia and argues that resistance to the nuclear chain must be global. Julia gives us the low-down on what happened at the Lizard's Revenge convergence in South Australia against uranium mining. Finally, Kylie reports back from the Rio + 20 climate conference in brazil and takes a hard look at the challenges facing the 'climate movement', suggesting that activists need to orientate more towards issues surrounding daily life.

From Queensland, Dave dissects the state's debt crisis. He contends that the LNP's attacks on the conditions of workers and communities aren't simply a result of ideology, or of Premier Campbell Newman being an especially nefarious right-winger, but should be seen in the context of a global attempt by capital to lower the level of social reproduction (the level of support that people need in order to keep on working for capital, i.e family structures, welfare, some time for rest from work, etc) that has followed in the wake of economic crisis. This means that even saying 'No' to what is happening can lead to more radical questions about how these kind of attacks are linked to the nature of capital, as opposed to just focusing on bad politicians with bad ideas. In another article, Annette M discusses the imposition of income management in Bankstown, and argues that this is happening in order to push people into the labour market, leading to downward pressure on the wages and conditions of the working class as a whole.

Finally, we have started a Mutiny blog. All the articles for this issue are available there (in exciting news for our nerdier readers some of the online articles include references). Check it out at http://www.mutinyzine.blog.com/

Love and solidarity, Mutiny Zine editors (Blackbeard, L Dog, Syzygy, Dumpstered Twin)

Subscribe to *Mutiny*! Get the new zine every month, and help us pay for printing and distribution (please!) If you can give out extra copies, we can send a number of zines for no charge. Subscriptions free for prisoners.

Name:_____

Address:_____

_____

Email:_____

___$5 (3 months) ___$10 (6 months) $___ (donation)

Copies each month: ___1 ___5 ___copies

Please send well concealed cash only to:
PO Box 4 / Enmore / NSW / 2042 / Australia

Please write, or email mutineers@graffiti.net about bulk distribution, international orders, if you don't have any money, or for any other special requests.

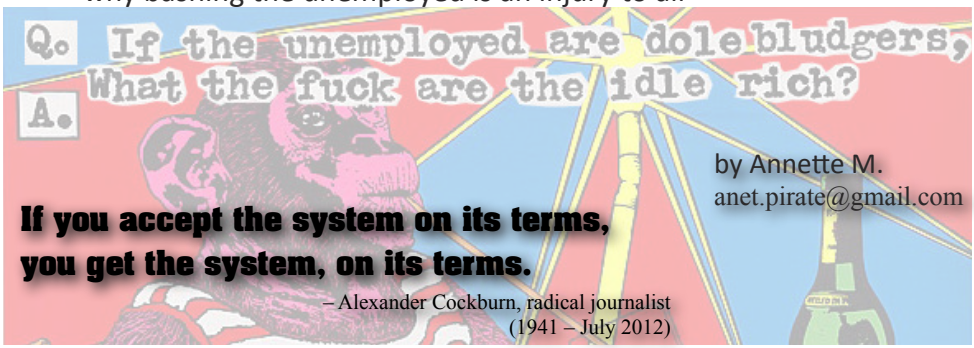
The Mutiny Zine Collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the Mutiny Zine Collective.

The Mutiny Zine Collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the contributors.

Contributors do not necessarily agree with the opinions of the Mutiny Zine Collective.

Income Management

why bashing the unemployed is an injury to all


Q. If the unemployed are dole bludgers,
What the fuck are the idle rich?
A.
If you accept the system on its terms,
you get the system, on its terms.
– Alexander Cockburn, radical journalist
(1941 – July 2012)

by Annette M.
anet.pirate@gmail.com

The policy of Income Management and its BasicsCard, a particularly dreaded piece of the NT Intervention that restricts where and how people can spend welfare payments (such as around alcohol and tobacco), has now come into force in Sydney's Bankstown and four other areas across the country. An active, broad coalition has been organising against the policy in Bankstown. But what's behind this aggressive policy push? What's been happening locally, and what are some perspectives for action?

"Can you imagine working somewhere, and your boss says, "I'm going to keep half your pay and control what you spend it on, because you can't manage it? It's unheard of! But this is what's happening". So said Patricia Morton-Thomas at a Forum held on May 26 in Bankstown by the "Not in Bankstown, Not Anywhere" Coalition against income management. The analogy is spot-on, because while it might seem as though people don't "work" for their benefit payments, the reality is that a whole series of work-like repetitive tasks must be performed by welfare recipients on an everyday basis (hunting for jobs, appointments with job agencies, job interviews, forms). Failure to complete any of these "busywork" tasks to the approval of Centrelink or the job agency results in cuts to payments, including being cut off completely. Income management (IM) goes hand in hand with recent legislation that makes these penalties more severe, intensifying the system of punishment for people accessing welfare (for info about this legislation see Grumpy Cat's article in Mutiny 60 last year, as well as www.assemblyfordignity.wordpress.com – eds).

In Bankstown as in the other "trial" sites, people who will be placed on IM are those assessed as "vulnerable", parents referred by child protection officers, and those who volunteer. The local Centrelink is under pressure from above to meet bizarre "targets" of putting 1,000 people on IM. There has been almost a complete media blackout of the issue, but what little coverage there has been has featured "Families" Minister Macklin spouting lies smothered in dubious "family values" propaganda: "The evidence is that it helps families. It's an additional tool to help families better manage their money in the interests of their children" (*ABC 7.30 Report*). Implicit in this is a prudish "wowser" attitude, that controlling alcohol and tobacco purchases through IM automatically

"helps" children. Regardless, the evidence from the NT is that it has been catastrophic for "families". To briefly recap: research by the Menzies School of Health found that it led to no improvement on food and beverage sales, fruit and vegetables or tobacco sales (published in Medical Journal of Australia, 2010). Income management has imposed a huge layer of time-wasting bureaucracy in people's lives, as people have to contact Centrelink every two weeks to actually have money put on their BasicsCard. The biggest study of IM impacts was conducted by the Equality Rights Alliance in 2011, which surveyed 180 women who had lived on the system. It found that:

- 74% did not find it easier to look after their families under IM.
- 85% had not changed what they buy because of the BasicsCard.
- 74% felt discriminated against in shops and elsewhere when people see the BasicsCard, and
- 79% wanted to get off income management.

So we know that IM has nothing to do with "helping families". Where is it coming from then? Given its horrendous consequences, you could be forgiven for thinking that the government is just hell-bent on punishing the disadvantaged. While politicians of both stripes, the media corporations and billionaires like Harvey Norman can't get enough of putting the boot into welfare recipients, this is not simply about a pathological hatred for the poor (as much as that may well possess the shrivelled minds of IM advocates). It's certainly not about the familiar mantra of "cost-cutting": the Bankstown coalition estimates that the scheme will cost $4500 per person, per year.

As Eva Cox has noted, the "trial" scheme of IM is the obvious next step in the plans of both the government and opposition to apply this model to *all* welfare recipients. Indeed, another set of laws went through this June to allow a further extension of the program to anywhere else the government nominates.

Beyond that, a sweeping attack on welfare as we know it is currently underway. A whole raft of changes to the Social Security Act were passed in 2010-11 which reflect the overall shift in emphasis away from income support, and towards policing people's personal lives. The point of the aggressive expansion of penalties and punishments like IM is ultimately to kick people off the system, and into work – any work.

The Indignity of Work

> "The economy cries out for workers, yet too many are left behind, unwilling or unskilled – and untouched by the dignity of work."

So said Treasurer Wayne Swan, launching the Budget in 2011 which allocated funds to implement IM and other welfare-policing measures. Indeed, for several years, there has been a labour shortage in Australia. But when he talks about the 'dignity of work' while implementing IM, Swan is definitely not speaking of attractive jobs which are interesting, pay well, use the workers' skills, are safe and have good conditions. Much less is he speaking about 'work' outside of capitalist control, 'labour' in its original meaning of creative human activity, which we might direct for ourselves. No, this is exclusively

'work' as dictated by the capitalist economy; work that some boss somewhere wants done. And what's more, Swan wants us to enjoy the 'dignity of work' in those jobs at the bottom end of the labour market - those with the worst pay and most insecure, repugnant conditions. In saying 'us', of course I mean the precarious sections of the working class in all our divergent situations. Readers might believe that the *Mutiny* readership is not the demographic being targeted to plug up that part of the labour market, but actually they don't care who they drag into it – and young people or others in precarious conditions are prime fodder. Certainly, there is a much wider circle of people who may be even more vulnerable and susceptible to getting trapped in such intolerable work, but the point is to push more people into it. Why?

"Reshaping the labour market", as in "I'm gonna reshape your face"

When there are not enough workers, bosses start getting antsy that the balance will tip towards the workers, as they are in demand, and so there could be an upward pressure on wages.. It doesn't matter whether this is even likely, even the whiff of it is enough to make a capitalist sweat. And so they need to have a level of unemployment - it's like their insurance scheme that makes sure workers don't get too uppity, lest they be chucked on the scrap heap and replaced with a young, more naïve model. But unemployed workers need to be actively looking for work in order to increase the pressure of competition in the labour market that the capitalist needs. If there are workers who are unemployed but aren't busting a gut to find another job, as there are currently, they must be pushed. By shoving people more aggressively into competition at the shitty end of the labour market, the bosses benefit from the downward pressure this exercises on wages and conditions across the board – across the working class as a whole. Furthermore, the more people who are willing to do extended unpaid internships and other "voluntary" skilled work in the arts, university, media and community sectors , the more at-risk paid jobs in these fields are… People are less likely to resist, the more they fear losing their job. They're more likely to put up with overtime, cutbacks, heavier workloads and other forms of speed-up. And so slowly yet inexorably, we are all drawn into the morbid reality known as the "race to the bottom". And this is where bashing the unemployed dove-tails with the push for more laws to "deregulate" the labour market and "boost productivity" (read: impose speed-up), and criminalise unionism.

The human scrap-heap

Another way to make people fear losing their job is to make it much more painful to be without one. In the age of the digital economy, jobs have been eliminated like so many deleted ones-and-zeros. In the past few months in Australia, 350 people were sacked at Toyota, 350 at Caltex in Kurnell, 440 at Ford,

and 100-odd at Darrell Lea. And those are just the ones that make the headlines - this is something that has been happening around the clock, year in year out, for years. Sure, the industrial sector does still exist, and the service sector will carry on, but there's only so many sacked workers who can get a new start in a *paid* job working for someone's E-commerce start-up. It's absurd to think that all those sacked workers will instantly find new jobs, or even jobs at all, even if they take a huge step down on the pay scale. Because the economy continually sheds workers, it must push those it casts off to get back on the treadmill to carry out the absurd race to undermine their own conditions of work.

Workers' playtime

The point is not to despair over the fool's game we are born into. Despite the sales job plugging the "work ethic" that is endlessly drummed into us, we can see that the dogma of work is not an ethic at all, but promotes slavery – whether in waged, or increasingly, 'classic' unpaid form. It's a lie that has possessed even the working class, to our own destruction. Income Management is about forcing this dogma on people's lives, along with glorified, petty-bourgeois nuclear-family "values"-- notwithstanding the decay and disarray of that institution itself! It's all very well for people with money and connections to get blind drunk and drive their sportscars or beat their partners, but a poor person taking time out from the labour force or smoking a cigarette is the height of shame. It is about imposing the right to dictate the lifestyle a person should live, regardless of what is suitable for them or their families. Meanwhile, citizenship is reduced to the duty to participate in paid work. The sections of the working class who fail to adhere to this duty are separated off, demonised as immoral and policed. But in reality, the policies are tying everyone, working or 'unemployed' into the confines of the labour market and the enforcement of work discipline.

> "What do they mean by jobs? Most 'work' is an expression of contempt for the people who must perform it. Most work is humiliating, stripped of worthy skills, destructive and tedious. Even the most sought-after jobs are places of real human misery: boredom". - Curtis White, *Managing Despair*, BigOther.com

This is not at all to glorify unemployment, that's a huge mistake, as anyone who has been unemployed for any extended period will know. Clearly there's work to be done, the question is, on whose terms. In this context, to question and refuse work, to assert the right not to work, is already to reverse perspective and start putting things back on our terms. There is a sense in which time spent not working can be time spent on more useful, life-affirming pursuits(or not). There is a real reason behind the dole having the nickname, the 'rock n roll', in that the development of punk, experimental music in the UK as in Australia may not have happened without the circles of artists who lived on it, and created a culture from below.

It's clear that Income Management is about slashing the last fragments of the welfare state, and re-orienting it into a mechanism to police the imposition of work not just on the unemployed, but the whole working class. However, it's not theirs to take away. The payments might be labelled "hand-outs" in media parlance, but they are certainly not a gift

from “on high”. The very existence of the welfare system was the compromise wrested from the boss class by radical, large-scale workers’ struggles that threatened the power of capital in the first half of the 20th century. This included elements like the Unemployed Workers’ Movement in the 30s, who held spirited street-speaking, rowdy demos of thousands, battled opposition from the trade unions, and many of whom were jailed for their defiance. (See Iain McIntyre’s *Disturbing the Peace*).

Meanwhile, Back in Bankstown…

The broad coalition of community groups, unions, and welfare agencies known as “Say no to IM, not in Bankstown, not Anywhere”, began to organise against IM about a year ago, with 63 organisations now on board. The group counts protests, pickets, seminars and even fax-jams of the local Labor member, among its successes. The coalition organised a vigil outside the local Centrelink throughout the first fortnight of IM coming into force, and received a positive and suitably outraged response from locals. By the end of the first week, Centrelink had managed to place less than 10 people on the program. One issue is that many of the member-organisations offer their on-paper support, but don’t have the capabilities for mobilising. As such, much of the organising has relied on a few key people, and is therefore vulnerable should their energies be called on elsewhere. The coalition is participatory and open to all, which seems an excellent opportunity for class-conscious proles to engage! Another issue is the almost total media blackout, making it a serious challenge to get the word out. No doubt, over time local staff will be under pressure to fulfil the sinister “target” of putting 1,000 people on IM, and will attempt to wear down people’s reluctance, so staying-power counts.

If this policy is going to be pushed back anywhere, it’s in Bankstown, and in so doing, we stand to strike a decisive blow to this particularly repulsive assault on the right of human beings to self-determine their way of life, and the larger stinking regime of imposing work and policing people’s lives which follows close behind it.

For more info, contact: www.sayno2gim.info

Debt in the Banana Republic

- by Dave

An extensively referenced version of this article is available online at www.mutinyzine.blog.com - eds.

Since their election Queensland's LNP government has unleashed a wave of attacks on the conditions of workers and communities. These attacks include at least, the planned reduction of 20,000 public service staff and the capping of wages, defunding of NGOs in the community sector, the intensification of the government's power to ban strikes and restrict industrial action and notably homophobic policy that targets Queer organisations and has seen the watering down of civil unions and the removal of surrogacy rights for Queer parents (and for those in unmarried heterosexual relationships shorter than two years). This constitutes a profound reorganisation of what we could call social reproduction.

All of this has happened in a context in which the government is claiming that the state is in some kind of financial crisis and thus they are compelled to make these changes whether they desire to or not. Crucial to this was the formation of the Queensland Commission of Audit (QCA) who investigated the state's books and declared that 'in recent years, the Government of Queensland [meaning the previous ALP governments] embarked on an unsustainable level of spending which has jeopardised the financial position of the State.' The QCA then suggested a thorough going policy of austerity which seems to function as the Government's blue-print.

What is going on? Why is this happening?

The most common understanding provided from the Left is to dismiss the notion that any kind of debt crisis exists and argue that these attacks are ideological. Socialist Alternative for example claims that 'the debt scare is a total fabrication to drive the LNP's political agenda'. Alex Scott, the secretary of Together, the main public sector union, also thinks that this debt crisis is a 'spun-up, non-existent problem'. This means that that these changes are solely driven by the bad ideas that the LNP have, and are not connected with, and perhaps harmful to, the actual material economic conditions of the state. Such an argument is often coupled with notions of returning to the era of Joh [Bjelke-Petersen, former QLD Premier- eds] and the implied reactionary culture, cronyism and corruption associated with this time. Simply put the Left are arguing that big bad right-wingers are destroying the state because they are big bad right-wingers.

This argument is similar to that martialled by the ALP and Trade Union leadership during the Work Choices campaign and is also a pretty bad mangling of the word ideology. Ideology is most often used to describe different kinds of sets of ideas as if they were so many 'cans of soup'. Ideology can however mean so much more – it can mean the condition that ideas take in a class society, and thus all of us, as much as we are in that society, are ideological. In this sense by saying

that Campbell Newman's government is somehow especially ideological, it ignores the ideological nature of everyday life, and also depressingly reinforces the idea of some non-ideological pragmatic normality. This is one of the founding myths of liberal capitalist society itself. Also if the problem is 'ideological' the solution is simple. Just campaign for a different, nice, non-ideological government of technocrats (the ALP?) to keep on sailing the good ship of the state.

There seems to be some powerful evidence for this view. The Workers Audit has exposed that the much touted claim of a looming debt of $100 billion is simply a projection based on an a series of assumptions (the Workers' Audit is a document 'written by angry workers for angry workers [as] an attempt to provide analysis on the LNP's attacks on us all.' See the 'Workers' Audit' facebook page for details – eds). The government's posturing that the Queensland economy is somehow in a similar financial situation to Spain, or is the 'Spain of Australian states' is laughable. Yet there is a deficit, though the size of this depends on what form of accounting you use. 'The operating balance of the government in 2010-2011 was a small deficit of $1.5 billion, but the QCA's fiscal measure changes this figure to a deficit of $7 billion.' The cause of this is not, as the government and QCA claim previous ALP mismanagement but rather the effects of the current global financial crisis. The state government financed its superannuation contributions and other liabilities through investments in the Queensland Investment Corporation with predicated returns of 7% but the 2008-9 budget reveals that the returns amounted to only 2%. This, coupled with declining revenue from coal royalties, Federal GST funding and house and car sales, produced the current deficit. One of the effects of this was the down-grading of Queensland's credit rating to AA+. Whilst this still signals a solid economic position it does increase the cost of borrowing. My core contention then is that yes, whilst the LNP claims are exaggerated, the state of Queensland is experiencing a version of a global phenomenon: a difficulty affording the levels of social reproduction previously taken as normal. The declining returns from the twin effects of the crisis: the bursting of the financial bubble, and a drop in income from worsening global conditions; is compelling this move towards austerity. This is fundamentally a politics of class: the level of social reproduction is being forced down, and the costs of it pushed more onto the shoulders of the working class as a whole.

A knotty problem

The question lurking in the background is what is the relationship between capital accumulation and the state, specifically the actions of an elected government? Or in more common language, what is the relationship between 'economics' and 'politics'? In the dominant narrative of our society economics and politics are two separate spheres (often expressed as the difference between 'the market' and 'the state') with economics being a world of timeless scientific laws and politics being the realm of ethics and ideals, linked always to parliament and surrounding activity. Economics is normally seen as trumping politics, as if

it is the existing reality that defines and limits what humans can consciously do.

We see this understanding of the world being deployed right now. The government and the QCA argue that the economic situation is bad, therefore we must embark on austerity. Social democratic opponents argue that the economic situation is not as bad as it is said to be, or should be solved differently, therefore the government policy is bad policy.

Unfortunately much radical thought also accepts this split between 'economics' and 'politics'. Orthodox Marxism, drawing on a particular reading of the 'Preface' from Marx's A Contribution to The Critique of Political Economy, made a certain reading of the world in which economics constituted a 'base' which determined the 'superstructure' of which politics was a part (such a reading is difficult to sustain if one goes past the 'Preface' and reads the rest of the book). The limitations of this approach led more innovative Marxists to flip the polarity and argue for the autonomy of the political. Despite the heated debates between the two positions, both maintain the constitutive split between economics and politics and like bourgeois thought, understand economics to be relatively mechanical and to be driven by its own innate mechanics.

The effect is that radical voices also recreate the bourgeois understanding of what crisis is. It becomes a simple numerical question – if the numbers are bad enough then yes, it's a real material question, if not, well it's just ideology. What this forgets is that crisis is not a mathematical equation, it is a crisis in a relationship of domination, which is perhaps expressed in numerical terms. This is the heart of a real critique of capitalism. Capitalism is a society in which domination takes the form of the transformation of wealth into commodities which are exchanged for, and organised through, the accumulation of value. Value necessarily finds its expression in money. Crisis then appears as a numerical question, when it is a social question, of which its numerical expression is part of a relation of domination.

This then helps us grasp the apparent difference between economics and politics. This split arises because of the particular nature of domination and class struggle in capitalism. Capitalism is a specific form of social domination, in which this domination does not take the appearance of direct exploitation between say lord and serf, but rather appears to be the automatic movements of the economy. In our lives this is experienced through 'real' things – the movement of interest rates, the circulation of commodities, if capital invests here or there, all shape our lives. But this movement is a movement of a process of fetishism, of a 'definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things' (Marx). In a very real way this is what class struggle is – the struggle of capital is to enforce its domination that takes the form of the 'economy' through the transformation of wealth into commodities, the centralisation of the means of production into the hands of capitalists, the imposition of money and the transformation of an increasing mass of people into workers – into those with nothing but their labour power to sell.

This is most obvious in the opening acts of capitalism, in primitive accumulation –'and this history, the history of their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire' (Marx). But it takes place all the time, every day, everywhere.

This also necessarily gives rise to another space called the 'political' tasked with overseeing and coordinating the general conditions and problems of capital accumulation whilst simultaneously being directed and ruled by them. 'The abstraction of relations of force from the immediate process of production and their necessary location (since class domination must ultimately rest on force) in an instance separated from individual capitals constitutes (historically and logically) the economic and the political as distinct, particular forms of capitalist domination.' The split of human activity into the apparently autonomous forms of economy/market and politics/state is part of how capital rules and through their very seeming separation they are completely bound together.

Thus perhaps we can start a new approach to understanding the activities of the current LNP government – how much does the restructuring of the Queensland state express the problems that capital is having in maintaining and increasing domination more generally and how does the state Government attempt to solve these problems?

The state and social reproduction

The state then is one of the ways social reproduction is maintained in capitalism. Capitalist social relations are produced in two ways. In part capital reproduces itself through the function of capital as capital, but also needed are all those forms of activity that might not in themselves directly produce commodities and accumulate surplus-value but are necessary to reproduce all that is necessary for capital accumulation to happen. This involves many distinct activities, which change with time and importance. It could be things like building roads and maintaining water quality, but of special interest are all those activities that are necessary to produce the most important commodity of all – labour-power, our ability to work. The exploitation of labour-power is the secret of capital accumulation. But the ability to work is not something fixed, it's a living potential of our bodies. It takes a lot to reproduce this potential; it's what we spend most of our wages on. And it has to happen both individually and socially. It involves everything from education and learning specific skills, to a hug after a bad day of work. It involves imprisoning those that break the rules, and inculcating the majority of the population into the dominant forms of ideology. It is not just our ability to work that has to be reproduced but our willingness to work too. At different moments of history this reproduction has been organised in a number of different ways. The dominant forms are the state, the family and specifically the work of

women in the home, and also charities and philanthropy. Whilst these domains appear separate they are twisted together and are terrains of, and shaped by, class struggle. The revolt of women against being confined to performing house-work has for example, compelled many previous tasks of social reproduction and care out of the home, and sometimes into profit-making industries themselves based around services and the provision of care.

After WWII a certain provision of welfare and state services was the 'deal' that capital offered to workers in the North in return for restricting their struggles within the framework of capitalism and increased productivity in the workplace (both often overseen by the Trade Unions and Left-wing parties). This deal was broken by the 'indiscipline and insubordination of the proletariat which in the workplaces "came together" with the emergence of a multitude of new proletarian struggles (by women, minorities, the unemployed, etc.) in the sphere of distribution leading to an exploitability crisis of labour power and to a legitimacy crisis of the capitalist state and its institutions.' (Ta Paidia tis Galarias, www.tapaidiatisgalarias.org). What we call neoliberalism (there's that fuzzy term) was capital's response to these struggles – which involved in part a flight of capital from rebellious workers to both new geographies and to increased investment in finance capital and direct counter-attacks and the imposition of discipline through increases in unemployment and misery. The new form of capitalism that arose from this involved a new organisation of social reproduction. This involved at least the increased funding of social reproduction through financialisation – we can see this in our daily lives in how as more costs were pushed on to us for health, housing, education etc. they had to be paid for by credit. Important as well in the Australian case was the development of superannuation – that retirement would no longer be funded by pensions provided through state revenue but rather a proportion of workers' remuneration would be forced to become capital and part of global flows of investment.

States and corporations also increasingly became dependent on financialisation and the constant creation of speculative bubbles to make up for and delay the consequences of an inability to impose and realise a sufficiently high rate of profit. In this sense financialisation was a response to the inability to reproduce the capital relation at sufficient intensity, to achieve sufficient forms of domination. Financialisation merely delayed and intensified the crisis in capital. The explosion of this financial architecture thus exposed the very contradictions that were masked by, intensified and delayed by financialisation. The bailing out of banks necessary to continue the circulation of money-capital meant the creation of a sovereign debt crisis, which across the globe states are attempting to push down onto workers through unleashing waves of austerity.

Of course the condition in Australia, and the finances of Queensland, are nowhere as near bad as those of say Spain or California. The continuation of the (perhaps wobbly) mining boom means a generally positive (if you like that kind of thing) level of growth and low unemployment. Yet that doesn't

get around the fact that the crisis has caused a problem for the provision of state services. In a textbook sense there is of course nothing particularly wrong with a state having debt at this level. But we don't live in a textbook. We live in a world where there are constant worries about another crash or crisis and speculation about major risks of looming and reoccurring liquidity crises (that is a shortage of the availability for credit). The state is thus in a bind: it has to balance multiple different tensions necessary for capitalism to function: how can it afford to provide social services, where will it get income from, how can it maintain a good credit rating so it can borrow more when necessary, how can it do all this in a way that maximises the opportunities for capital to accumulate? There is a difficult question about how much politicians, the ideologues of capital and capitalists themselves really explicitly understand these questions. While I can prove no direct correlation, the Business Council of Australia's submission to the last Federal Budget calls for a similar policy of austerity so the government can be ready to step in with stimulus and bail-outs whilst removing pressures on capital accumulation.

This is the problem the LNP government is trying to address. Public service cuts are either a forcing down of the provision of services or forcing less workers to do more work. The privatisation of service provision, the slashing of grants, the establishment of global budgeting or the formation of independent schools will also put downward pressures on workers' conditions, and also perhaps generate opportunities for capital to turn these into direct points of capital accumulation. The new industrial relation laws will work as a weapon against even defensive industrial action (industrial action to defend current levels of pay and conditions- eds). What is just as important, but harder to notice, is how the removal of state provision means that cost will be directly forced onto the wages of workers themselves. Indeed the second wave of reforms the QCA calls for explicitly argues that the 'community who are able to access alternative services (meaning private health and education) are encouraged to do so.' Also much care work will still take place, but it will happen more and more in the home, and that still means on the shoulders of women. In this way we can understand that the bigotry towards Queers by the LNP government has a certain rationale behind it. Not only does it satisfy the reactionary vote they rely on but it also works to reinforce the traditional family and use peoples' love for each other to provide unpaid care work to capital, largely undertaken by women.

This is a class attack, an attempt to lower the level of social reproduction and push more of the weight onto workers' paid and unpaid labour. Now of course all this is happening with a certain LNP flavour, who are undoubtedly using the moment to settle some old scores – but we should also not forget that the that the ALP was attempting to address the same problem by selling assets such as Queensland Rail. This is a real contradiction for capital. It means that those of us organising against these attacks can't simply argue for a change of government policy – rather even saying 'no' compels us to start asking deeper and more radical questions.

Globalising Resistance to Radiation: From Australia to Japan

by Alexander Brown, Tokyo

Throughout June and July thousands and now tens of thousands of people have been gathering every Friday outside the prime minister Yoshihiko Noda's residence in Tokyo, to protest his plans to re-start Japan's nuclear reactors. Following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in March last year, nuclear reactors that went offline for routine maintenance and testing were not restarted due to stringent new testing requirements imposed by the government as a consequence of the disaster. In May this year, I joined thousands of protesters in a colourful parade in the centre of Tokyo to celebrate the switching off of the last nuclear reactor still operating. This was the first time since 1970 that all of Japan's nuclear reactors were switched off. In celebration we danced and drummed late into the night in the square outside Kōenji station in Tokyo.

In June, the nuclear cabal struck back. Their representative, prime minister Noda, coerced and cajoled local government leaders in the region of Oi Town in the western prefecture of Fukui into agreeing to the restart of the Oi nuclear reactor. Noda threatened economic collapse and life-threatening electricity shortages that would threaten the electricity supply to hospitals. These ridiculous assertions were countered by anti-nuclear activists and experts who pointed out that they were based on inaccurate calculations of the true electricity shortfall.

On Saturday 30 June hundreds of protesters gathered outside the gates of the Oi nuclear reactor in protest at the travesty of democracy that was taking place inside. In Tokyo, I joined hundreds of angry demonstrators outside the prime minister's residence who staged an impromptu march around the residence to vent their fury. The following Friday, the numbers outside the prime minister's residence swelled to 100,000. The crowd spilled out from the footpath and onto the road. This was the first time in decades that protesters had managed to escape police control and fill an entire street in Japan for a protest. The following week, a similar number of people gathered and, in defiance of police, once more occupied the street.

In Australia this month, 500 activists gathered outside 'the gates of hell' at another link in the nuclear chain: the Olympic Dam mine in South Australia as part of the 'Lizard's Revenge' festival and protest camp. Activists occupied the road outside the

mine, sat down in front of the gates of Olympic Dam and played cricket in protest at plans to expand the world's largest uranium mine. The carnivalesque atmosphere that combines militant resistance with creativity and celebration is common to the anti-nuclear movements in the two countries. Australia and Japan share a longstanding nuclear relationship based on the exploration and exportation of uranium resources to fuel Japanese nuclear reactors. Since the Fukushima nuclear disaster last year, a new relationship is coming into view based on the struggles in both countries to shut down the nuclear industry.

1. Australia and Japan: The Uranium Connection

Following the nuclear disaster at Fukushima, Yvonne Margarula, Senior Traditional Owner of the Mirrar people whose traditional lands take in the site of the Ranger uranium mine in Kakadu National Park, wrote to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon expressing her concern that uranium from Australia might have played a role in the disaster. Yvonne expressed her feelings of sorrow and regret that the poisonous uranium she has fought so hard to keep in the ground was now contaminating Japan and, as the radioactive cloud drifted across the northern hemisphere, the entire world.

On 31 October 2011, Dr Robert Floyd, Director-General of the Australian Safeguards and Non-proliferation Office in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, confirmed that Yvonne Margarula's concerns were well founded. He stated before a Joint Standing Committee of the Australian parliament in September 2011 that

> Australian obligated nuclear material was at the Fukushima Daiichi site and in each of the reactors—maybe five out of six, or it could have been all of them; almost all of them.

When the global nuclear industry began to develop in the late 1960s a major exploration programme was launched in Australia that led to the discovery of significant uranium deposits. These deposits were high grade, around 0.3% U_3O_8[1] and contained a significant amount of uranium. The discovery of these deposits made it possible for Australia to participate in the commercial nuclear industry. Japan relies on exporter countries such as Australia to provide the uranium used in its nuclear power plants. Japanese capital, with government assistance, became involved in the development of uranium mines such as the Ranger mine in Kakadu. As of 2006, Australia provided some one third of Japan's total uranium imports. Multinational mining giants Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton export uranium to Japan from their Olympic Dam and Ranger uranium mines.

The Fukushima disaster exposed the global circuits of the nuclear industry. It made visible the shattered lives, poisoned environments, hazardous working conditions and political corruption that lie behind the innocuous act of plugging in an electrical device in Tokyo or any other city throughout Japan. This is a chain in which we are all implicated and which only we have the power to disrupt; whether by protesting

1 triuranium oxide, a compound of uranium

uranium in South Australia or standing in front of the gates of a nuclear reactor in Oi Town. While the disaster revealed the global interconnection of the nuclear industry, it also revealed a multitude of resistances, refusals and rebellions that make that industry vulnerable and which will eventually bring it to its knees.

2. Globalising Resistance to Radiation: Australia-Japan Solidarity After Fukushima

In response to the Fukushima nuclear disaster, anti-nuclear groups across Australia held joint rallies on Hiroshima Day, 6 August 2011. In my hometown of Wollongong about 30 local peace activists and a guest from Japan attended the annual Hiroshima Day commemoration. The event has been held on an annual basis since 1979 and Hiroshima commemorations were held in Wollongong from as early as 1960. This year, in addition to remembering the terrible tragedy of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki we remembered the tragedy at Fukushima and the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters that have caused such tremendous loss of life. Later that day about one hundred people attended a second action, organised by The Wollongong Anti-Nuclear Group, in the same place against nuclear power and nuclear weapons in response to the terrible tragedy in Japan.

Anti-nuclear protests in Australia continue one year after Fukushima. Responding to prime minister Noda Yoshihiko's decision to restart the Oi nuclear reactor in Fukui prefecture a group in Brisbane protested outside the Japanese Consulate in June this year. In their own words their action was part of a 'global response to Prime Minister Noda's announcement that he would re-introduce nuclear power by putting the Oi reactors back on line.'

3. The Uncertain Future of the Nuclear Industry

While anti-nuclear protests in Australia have increased following the Fukushima disaster, Australian state and federal governments have been keen to put the accident behind them and expand this poisonous industry. In February, for example, the New South Wales state government overturned a 26-year-ban on uranium exploration in the state. Energy Minister Chris Hartcher told uranium industry figures in June that his government hoped to develop a 'vibrant uranium exploration industry'. In West Australia, too, the government has approved a uranium mine at Wiluna, which, if it comes to fruition, will be the first uranium mine in that state.

While Australian governments and nuclear advocates have been trying to push ahead with plans to expand uranium mining, the market realities after Fukushima are somewhat more complicated. On 10 May 2012 *The*

Australian newspaper announced Japanese trading house Mitsui's decision to pull out of the 340-tonne per year Honeymoon uranium mine in South Australia. The company possessed a 49 per cent stake in the mine. Mitsui first bought a stake in the mine in 2008, adding uranium for the first time to its investment portfolio. The mine commenced production in 2010 after capital expenditure of 138 million dollars.

While Mitsui deny any connection between the Fukushima disaster and its decision to pull out of the mine, this is hard to believe considering the context of a total shutdown of all nuclear reactors in Japan. Mitsui spoke in economic terms of its lack of confidence in the project producing adequate future returns. However, the company also claimed it would continue to seek investment opportunities in the uranium mining industry. While companies try to maintain market confidence in their investments, the reality facing the future of nuclear energy is much more unstable with continuing protests in Japan and widespread uncertainty in China and India, two of the main projected future consumers of Australian uranium, over the fate of nuclear power.

Australia is thought to possess the largest uranium deposits in the world, with about 23 percent of total reserves. For those who would like to profit from selling these reserves the disaster, the attendant economic slump in Japan and in particular the effects of the nuclear accident are of concern. Debates among investors in Australia over the possible impact of Fukushima continue. Positions range from faith in the ability of Japan's nuclear industry to bounce-back to the belief that a drop in uranium exports will be replaced by increased exports of coal, natural gas and foodstuffs to the idea that a fall in exports to Japan will be made up by growing exports of uranium to China or Russia. The anti-nuclear movement's intervention helps increase this uncertainty and divides the ruling class over the question of investment in uranium.

4. Getting Away from Nuclear: Making Global Democracy

All over the world the nuclear industry is subject to contestation. The industry's circuits of commodity production are characterised by struggles over uranium mining, power plant construction and waste disposal. While at each link in the nuclear fuel chain activists, workers and indigenous landholders fight for their own unique set of reasons and interests, the combined effect undermines the nuclear industry. The Fukushima disaster has revealed the global interconnectedness of this industry, but it has also revealed the common desire of people all over the world to put a stop to it.

From Olympic Dam to Oi Village, from the fight against the proposed nuclear waste dump in Muckaty, NT, to [opposition to the] Rokkasho village nuclear reprocessing plant in Japan; our resistance must be as diffuse, as all-pervasive and as persistent as radiation itself. By taking action in solidarity with people all over the world who are affected by the nuclear fuel cycle we can forge a global democratic alternative to the capitalist nuclear industry. Wherever we are, let's fight to stop the nuclear industry and the poisonous anti-democratic politics on which it depends. The time is ripe for us to put an end to the nuclear industry once and for all.

Locking down the Gates of Hell

Julia

According to the stories and law of the Kokatha people, the traditional owners of the land on which BHP's Olympic Dam mine (just north of Roxby Downs in South Australia) is located, and the neighbouring Arabunna people whose land is affected by the extraction of water from the mine, a lizard sleeps under the ground. In many versions of this story, this Lizard is the guardian of the big sickness and death by uranium. He keeps watch over the poison from the uranium, covering it with his body, to keep it from harming the people on top. The Lizard should not be disturbed or else sickness will come out of the ground.

Clearly the Lizard has been disturbed by the ecological destruction wrought by the BHP copper/uranium mine that has been operating since the 1980s. It exports 4,500 tonne of uranium and 180,000 tonnes of copper. BHP is currently proposing to expand it, supplementing the underground mine with an open cut mine, which is planned to be 4 x 3.5 kilometres and 1 kilometre deep, to enable it to access the uranium reserves under ground - which are 30% of the world's known reserves, with enough uranium to fuel the world's 430 power reactors for 40 years. The proposed expansion would make Olympic Dam the largest mine in the world, visible from space. Uranium production is expected to increase to 19,000 tonnes a year, increasing the production of radioactive tailings six-fold to 58 million tonnes annually. The expanded mine would utilise 250 million litres of water daily, 42 million litres from the Great Artesian Basin and 200 million litres from a proposed desalination plant. The Indenture Act, which confirms an agreement between the South Australian government and BHP, makes BHP exempt from 20 SA laws including cultural heritage protections, water and environmental protection and freedom of information, passed both houses of parliament in November 2011.

In July approximately 500 people converged close to the 'Gates of Hell' which mark the entrance of BHP's Olympic Dam mine. People travelled thousands of miles to attend the convergence and aimed to shut down the mine. This was driven by their opposition to the nuclear cycle. The many reasons for this range from supporting traditional owners in their stance against the mine and drawing attention to the 'radioactive racism' of the uranium industry in Australia; the environmental impacts of mining, the problems associated with uranium transport, the impossibility of safely disposing of nuclear waste, and the problems with the international 'safeguards' system - meaning that there is a dangerous possibility that uranium from Olympic Dam could be used in the production of nuclear weapons.

The convergence was part protest, part skill share and part music festival. It had a celebratory atmosphere, with music from a solar powered sound system keeping the main stage cranking until the wee hours each night. The daily protest marches to the gates had a carnivalesque vibe, with zombie shuffles, 'frock on the front line' protest fashion parades, a sparkly mascot in the form of a lizard car (which raised the ire and suspicions of the SA police), boom boxes and lots of dancing.

The shared interest of the South Australian state government and BHP in the expansion of the mine was clear. The state footed the bill for the sort of massive police operation we are increasingly seeing (think Broome, where there has been a large police response to the NoGas campaign against Woodside Petroleum) to protect the super-profits of mining companies. According to some reports there were as many as 400 police, including the STAR (Special Tasks and Rescue) force, police horses and the dog squad, and a helicopter encircling the protest camp. Under powers granted to police to manage traffic under the Summary Offence Act Lizard's was declared a 'special occasion'. Roads leading to the camp were consequently closed to everyone except 'personnel employed, contract to or agents of and persons authorised by BHP Billiton, police and emergency services personal, and other people as approved by the police'. A roadblock established at Borefield Road the midnight before the convergence, was designed to force people who had met at Alberrie Creek in order to prepare for Lizard's Revenge, to make a detour of several hundred kilometres to get to Roxby. Luckily news of the road block's imminent establishment reached the camp, and a group of about 80 travelled down Borefield Rd on Wednesday night, beating the road block and setting up camp close to the gates despite police protestations! On 11 June a Ministerial Declaration was made under the Protective Security Act that the region around Olympic Dam was a 'protected area' which gave police and protective service officers greater powers to ask people for their names and addresses, greater search powers and powers to give move-on directions. As a result, police established roadblocks at the turn off to the camp, stopped all cars and collected the details of all protesters before then escorting cars to the camp. Many cars were detained for hours and thoroughly searched. Around 15 cars were defected for minor infractions leaving people stranded. Every time a car came or left the convergence camp their details were again collected. In this way police effectively established a 'kettle' in the desert, by having a large police presence at either entrance of the camp.

Despite these highly visible police information-gathering activities, most cops were waiting in the wings, invisible to cameras. Only a small number of police accompanied the marches to the gate. The visible policing operated in a more normative and preventative mode, seeking through surveillance and containment to deter people from taking more direct action to shut down operations on the mine. On marches to the gate, chatty young female police officers mingled with the crowd, thereby gathering intelligence. SA police were also active on twitter at #lizardsrevenge and other social media sites providing chatty (if highly biased) public updates. There were no arrests at Lizards until the Tuesday morning when six people were arrested following a 'Breakfast Not Bombs' where activists temporarily blocked the trucks heading to the mine by cooking pancakes in the middle of the road. More arrests followed in the afternoon when activists staging a cricket match on the road refused to obey move-on directions given in line with the Protective Security Act. The following morning activists locked onto a truck heading to the mine, again temporarily blocking the road.

It is important to reflect on and learn from the various policing strategies utilised at Lizards. Over the last few years we have seen an increase in the use of legislation which targets specific areas and persons in order to police protests. Similar legislation was enacted for the APEC (NSW, 2007) and CHOGM (WA, 2011) protests. The policing strategy at Lizards appears to fit a counter-insurgency model, where there is a convergence between community models of policing (designed to collect information about targets and allow for a greater intrusiveness in the daily lives of the targeted population) which is accompanied and backed by an increasingly paramilitary style of policing. The direct police violence which characterised some previous anti-uranium protests, notably against the Beverley Uranium Mine in 2000, was absent at Lizards Revenge. Except of course there was the threat of police violence - there was a clear sense that if people stepped outside the bounds of what the state would tolerate as 'legitimate' protest, policing resources were ready to be deployed in an excessive and potentially very brutal manner.

Since Lizard's Revenge there have been reports that BHP might delay the expansion. If BHP don't get their final planning documents to the relevant Ministers by the end of the year the Indenture Agreement between BHP and the SA government will need to be renegotiated. These announcements are a testament to the hard work of the anti-nuclear movement and a cause for celebration. Post-Lizard's there is a need for ongoing solidarity and fundraising for arrestees, some of whom wish to contest the legitimacy of the laws they were charged under and continue placing pressure on BHP. Clearly we need to build on the energy, vibrancy and colour of the Lizard's convergence to help strengthen an anti-extractivism movement in Australia which in solidarity with an Indigenous sovereignty movement can reclaim land from corporate interests and ecologically disastrous practices.

http://lizardsrevenge.net/history/

Rio+20: Asking hard questions in the Marvelous City

by Kylie

Rio+20 marked twenty years since the Rio Earth Summit – the UN conference that brought together heads of state to discuss and sign agreements on 'sustainable development'. 1992 was probably the zenith of optimism about what these kinds of talks could achieve, with countries signing the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This spawned the yearly 'COP's (Conferences Of the Parties to the convention), the most well-known being the Kyoto meeting in 1996 and Copenhagen in 2009.

In 2012, barely anyone even pretends to believe in the negotiation process any more. Obviously this is a part of a wider crisis of multilateralism (hello, imminent collapse of the EU!) But the environment and sustainability talks have been particularly embarrassing for their advocates, with year after year of rising carbon pollution and deals that even the most compromised NGOs can't get enthusiastic about.

A short history of climate countersummits

Copenhagen was in many ways the high water mark for climate change as a global issue, hailed by many business, state, media and NGO representatives as "the last chance to save the world" with a "Fair, Ambitious and Binding" treaty. But not everyone who went to Copenhagen was pleading with governments to make a good deal. The part of the climate movement with its roots in social justice and counter-globalist politics saw the talks and the circus around them as hopelessly captive to corporate power. Many of these groups sought to disrupt the official conference and open it to a peoples' assembly in an action called 'Reclaim Power.'

But this part of the movement wasn't exactly victorious in Copenhagen either. Over a decade after protests in Seattle shut down the World Trade Organisation, governments have learned how to contain summit protests in the streets with well-funded, aggressive and punitive policing. In Copenhagen, protest organisers and participants faced serious legal consequences and heavy-handed treatment before, during and after actions. In both Rio and Cancún (where the COP was held in 2011) militarised 'preventative' policing – overflowing with machine guns and armoured vehicles – was standard. In this model, the possibility of mass antagonism to the actual talks is effectively shut off; no storming of conference centers or blocking delegates' entry [is possible]. 'Reclaim Power' at Copenhagen did not manage to open the conference to a peoples' assembly, and the impact of the action was hotly contested.*

* For two different takes, see
The political success of the COP15 mobilisations is still to come…
by Bertie Russell
http://shiftmag.co.uk/?p=331%20

The Dead End of Climate Justice
by Tim Simons and Ali Tonak
http://www.counterpunch.org/2010/01/08/the-dead-end-of-climate-justice/

Managing dissent when the whole world is watching

Governments have learned another lesson over the last 10+ years of summit protests– corralling 'civil society' into an alternative space (or better yet, several alternative spaces) miles away from the actual summit. In Rio, the main civil society space, called the Peoples' Summit, was a long stretch of beachside park, densely populated with tents for plenaries, workshops, stalls, performances and meetings. It was no shoestring affair, with funds from the Brazilian public purse, Oxfam and the Ford Foundation, among others.

The Peoples' Summit performed a range of different functions for different groups. For some, it was a space of political debate and articulation – and much blood, sweat and tears was poured into producing a final declaration. Some used the infrastructure to get stories of social and environmental destruction out to an international audience, through workshops and 'toxic tours' of the city. Some used it in order to strategise with allies. Particular Brazilian campaigns were undoubtedly strengthened during the week – notably the campaign against Vale (one of the world's largest mining companies, with a stake in the giant Belo Monte dam project), the national campaign against the weakening of the Forest Code, and the campaign against forced removals of communities to make way for development related to the World Cup and Olympics. Finally, it was a chance to promote specific ideological or concrete projects – from the omnipresent Hare Krishnas to groups discussing "fair trade offsets."

Useful and important work certainly happened in and around the Peoples' Summit. And yet, movements for environmental justice need to ask ourselves some tough questions. Fossil fuel industries and the capital that drives them are winning on too many fronts – whether they're backing increasingly noisy climate change deniers, or successfully re-branding their activities as part of a new 'Green Economy.' The three debates I raise below aren't new - they'll be familiar to everyone who's followed discussions in anti-globalization and climate movements over the past 10-20 years. But they're what my time in Rio left me thinking about, and I hope setting them down might be useful for processes of reflection.

Climate change framing – past its use-by date?

In 2009, the global justice movement was asking itself whether climate change was in fact "the new 'big one'"; the story that could reinvigorate anti-capitalist politics.* In hindsight it seems that the answer was probably 'no' - particularly in the light of movements like Occupy and the Spanish Indignados, which have mobilised more people than climate activists ever dreamed of. I don't say this to denigrate the hard work that's been done, or the incredible victories that have been and continue to be won under the umbrella of climate politics. In the UK, climate camps were enormously successful in training, mobilizing and inspiring a new wave of activists, with an explicitly anti-capitalist politics and the experience of winning really important battles (like grinding new coal-fired power

* *The movement is dead, long live the movement* by Tadzio Mueller
http://turbulence.org.uk/turbulence-4/the-movement-is-dead-long-live-the-movement/

in Britain and a new runway at Heathrow to a halt). In the US, a climate justice politics allied to indigenous communities and communities of colour emerged, and made green jobs with social justice an early priority in the Obama administration. In Australia, people built a grassroots climate movement increasingly willing to take direct action against the fossil fuel barons. These are not small things, and they were all achieved by talking about the climate.

However, in the wake of Copenhagen in Europe, recession and the rise of the Tea Party in the US, and the passing of catastrophically regressive carbon price legislation in Australia, the self-identified 'climate movement' is in retreat across the world. Activists have struggled to connect the technocratic, acronym-laden language of climate politics to people's daily lives. While it's true that people's livelihoods are being threatened right now in areas particularly sensitive to climate change, it is also true that more serious impacts in the rest of the world are yet to arrive, and that temporal gap has proved a huge hurdle. The movement has often relied on dire warnings about the coming climate 'emergency'– and that kind of message has a built-in obsolescence. As I heard it put recently, "you can only cry wolf once."

In the context of global financial upheaval and economic precarity, we're likely to lose every time 'the climate' is pitted against peoples' livelihoods. Sadly, the fossil fuel industry (and many environmentalists) have managed to frame the issue exactly that way. And if the climate movement campaigns for carbon pricing that drives up people's basic cost of living, we are not only failing to tap into energy that has turned so many people out onto the streets of New York and Madrid – which comes from the lived experience of insecure work and crushing debt – we are actively placing ourselves on the wrong side of it. Brendan Smith and Jeremy Brecher write that "poll-driven" US green groups have long agreed with this, though it's arguable whether this has driven them to change anything but their taglines. More substantial efforts to resolve this tension by pushing for a 'green new deal' (where saving 'the climate' goes hand in hand with saving 'the economy') have met with limited success, and are open to anti-capitalist and ecological critiques.*

Painful as it may be, we should consider whether the discourse of 'climate action' has been irredeemably captured by neoliberals, policy wonks and capital, for their ends. As far back as 2008, anarchists in the UK questioned whether climate camp was "likely to be interpreted as a gesture of support for tightened social control and austerity measures." More recently Ali Tonak argued that "climate as an issue to organise around is full of dangerous pitfalls and is proving to be a strategically unwise platform for those who are fighting for a world free of ecological devastation." Nonetheless, we have to keep working with the climate frame – regardless of whether it works as a mobilising message (which it clearly still does for some audiences) or a unifying umbrella for a series of connected issues like food access and border controls (less clear), people will have to confront its devastating impacts. So we can't afford to entirely abandon the discursive terrain of climate change to the forces of darkness. But to what extent we prioritise it, and at what cost, is worth debating.

** Beautiful Green World: On the myths of the green economy* Rosa Luxemburg Foundation http://www.rosalux.de/publication/38457/beautiful-green-world.html

Of countersummits and COPs

We've known for a while the limits of what Tadzio Müller called "countersummits-r-us." The brightest sparks in environmental justice organizing have long said that the UN negotiations are a dead end - as early as 2009 climate justice activists were urging each other not to pin their hopes on a good deal. After Copenhagen, Rising Tide stopped a coal train in Australia, declaring that after the world's governments had failed, "now it's up to us."

And yet we keep devoting time and energy to the UN process. It seems as long as the world's decision-makers keep gathering, we will keep stalking them. This is to a certain extent inevitable, and necessary. Playing a defensive or blocking role in negotiations remains important, if we are not to see new swathes of resources handed over to privatisation, or (in the case of the Australian government's policy agenda) large sums of foreign aid money handed over to mining companies. But we need to make sure it's not taking up so much of our time, resources and energy that we can't do other work.

If we accept that the countersummits will continue, let's get the most we possibly can out of them. Even when we're shunted far away from official spaces, we can still do effective actions. We saw this in Rio, when 3000 people turned up to Vale's HQ in downtown Rio, listened to spokespeople of communities affected by the company, then projected a target onto the building and left it covered with blood-coloured paint. And beyond the summit spectacle? Certainly, we can educate each other and reinforce movement ties through actions and workshops "for us, by us" (to borrow a phrase). But despite a significant degree of randomness at these gatherings – who has funding to travel, who self-selects (that the people who choose to go to these events may have particular problematic characteristics – eds) – they are still an opportunity to strategise internationally. People used this opportunity in Rio, but perhaps not as much as we could have. We should take every opportunity to figure out the nuts and bolts of how we get strong enough to win against fossil fuel profiteers - what messages, what targets, what timelines. And maybe, in the end, less summit-hopping and more door-knocking where we live and work.

artist unknown

The front line is the fenceline: where we're already winning

This last point brings us to the good news: that struggles under the umbrellla of the 'global climate movement' are actually winning, on several fronts. But they're not always being won as struggles primarily about climate change. In the U.S., anti-coal activism has brought city-based allies to work alongside communities living in the shadow of mountaintop removal. "Fracking" has become a household word, not because of its climate impacts, but because people are speaking out about their drinking water catching on fire. Communities in California and Chiapas are campaigning against climate legislation that would allow oil companies to buy offsets from Mexican forests, instead of cleaning up the Californian air they are polluting. In Bolivia, indigenous groups have forced the government into a bitter battle over a proposed highway through the middle of a rainforest – and while they have mobilized support from climate activists and others in the cities, they have framed the issue around their right to decide what happens on their land. In Australia, for all the foreboding that leftists may feel about such an alliance, a coalition of farmers and environmentalists is proving to be a formidable enemy for the gas industry. In the UK, climate justice activists are organizing around "fuel poverty"- the inability of people to heat their homes.

All of these struggles are anchored in organizing where people work and live their lives. For those in the climate movement afraid of giving up the momentum and power of the larger climate change frame: it doesn't have to be an either/or. Making the case to nonprofit funders last year, Sarah Hansen argued "[i] t's not merely that grassroots organizing wins change at the local level but, in case after case, builds the political pressure and climate for national change as well." Holly Creenaune has argued convincingly that we can support and escalate frontline struggles against fossil fuels as well as strengthening community organizing on climate change in Australia.*

We can keep using the climate change frame when it works. We can keep going to summits when it works. But we should make sure that we don't do either of those things at the expense of building power on the front lines. Because it's there, ultimately, and not at the negotiating tables of the UN, that the larger struggle is going to be won.

* *The climate movement – ideas for renewal* by Holly Creenaune
http://www2.foe.org.au/resources/chain-reaction/editions/111/the-climate-movement-2212-ideas-for-renewal

Reviews

China Mieville- *Railsea*

Reviewed by sci_fi

Another year, another China Mieville novel! Railsea begins almost (no, pretty much exactly) as a parody of Moby Dick - with the brooding captain of a vessel hellbent on catching a great white creature, etc. The twist, of course, is that the vessel is not a ship, and the sea that the vessel traverses is not the kind we're used to. The 'railsea' of the title is an nigh-endless plain of porous soil teeming with deadly burrowing creatures, overlaid with a mind-boggling tangle of intersecting railway lines; and the quarry (or 'philosophy') of the hilariously self-aware yet po-faced Captain Naphi is not a giant whale but a giant mole named Mocker-Jack. Above, the 'upsky' - a toxic, otherworldly atmosphere - obscures impossible alien creatures left behind by ancient interstellar travellers.

The novel's protagonist is a young man named Sham ap Soorap who signs on to the moletrain Medes as the doctor's apprentice. Early on he makes a startling discovery which sets him on a quest much stranger than the hunt for Mocker-Jack.

It took me a while longer than it should have to work out that this is a 'young adult' novel, and that it wasn't going to turn into something as complex as last year's [novel by Mieville] *Embassytown*. But from the get-go *Railsea* reminded me strongly of Philip Reeve's young-adult sci-fi trilogy *Mortal Engines*. Reeve's vaguely steampunk far-future world was similarly far-fetched to the point of silliness, but contained a great parody of capitalism, or perhaps imperialism. That novel's default system of economics was 'Municipal Darwinism', where mobile cities literally hunt and eat each other across the planet's drained sea-floors in the aftermath of an ancient nuclear war. It was amusingly literal and also an awesome plot device/setting.

Mieville's politics are a little bit more subtle in their injection into the story, and don't often beat the reader about the head overmuch here. The idiosyncrasies of the novel's far-future setting are the result of a bizarre 'business bickering' where rival railway companies overlaid lines everywhere long ago in an insane competition with each other that ultimately destroyed them. This is, I think, perhaps a sly little poke at the illogic of Thatcherite economics - railway networks being one of those things where it's (completely) impractical to have a marketplace where potential passengers pick and choose from different vendors, but one of those things that neoliberal governments have privatised anyway.

I hesitated about including all this detail in the review, but none of it is really spoiler material. Like the best science fiction, the whys and wherefores of how the world came to be this way are very much under-explained and left for the reader to guess at, while the characters just live with it. It is, after all, their world, and Mieville is often more interested in cool train chases and monsters and how people live. He explores this in a sympathetic but teasing narrator's voice, taking great pleasure in telling a fable and playing with our expectations of it. In a novel that references and bounces off so many stories of adventure and intrigue on the high seas, this is nearly inevitable. *Railsea* feels almost like it does belong on a 'boy's own adventure' shelf with Robert Louis

Stevenson books, but of course, in China Mieville's deft hands, its appeal is much wider, and its ideas greater and stranger.

Dead Europe (film)

Reviewed by Syzygy

Based on the book by Christos Tsiolkas, *Dead Europe* is an amazing movie. The main character is Isaac, a Greek-Australian photographer, who travels to Greece in order to scatter the ashes of his father in the village in which he was born. The film follows his journey in Europe, which eventually leads him out of Greece to Paris and Budapest.

Yet Isaac's story is ultimately secondary to the bigger issues that *Dead Europe* explores – like borders, superstition and the significance of the collapse of 20th century communism (and the ending rebukes the individualism of lots of films where the main character's story is first and foremost – won't say more for fear of spoilers though!). It riffs off the famous first line of the Communist Manifesto – 'a spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism'! A spectre literally haunts Isaac throughout the film – except Marx's reference to a positive, liberatory subject is inverted. What is haunting Isaac is instead the ghost of Josef, a refugee boy, whose presence evokes the past and present of racism in Europe.

20th century communism is also represented - through Nico's dead father and his father's friend Gerry, both former CP members. The film very much avoids getting misty-eyed about this past, but does suggest that the vacuum created by the collapse of even such a deeply flawed left has been filled by the resurgence of something worse: anti-semitism, racial prejudice and superstition.

This lack of strong left subjectivity and organisation and its ramifications is an important concern of *Dead Europe.* There is a poignant scene where a refugee woman that Isaac is meeting with in order to possibly try and smuggle her into Australia (after having been pushed into doing so by the Communist Gerry) is taken away by French police. He is forced to watch – alone, without collective support, he is (and we are) powerless. It is no coincidence that Isaac is a photographer – someone who can capture images of society's bleakness. Throughout the film, Isaac turns away from photography, and you sense that he wants to do more than be a passive, despairing observer of events. But he does not know what to do – there is no emancipatory movement or group that it is easy to turn to. The only antidote that Isaac can come up with for his troubles is to dally with the superstitions of the past. While this theme was cleverly explored, one problem I had with the film was that it maybe more reflects the time in which the book was written (2005), than 2012, where there is perhaps more of a 'left', seen electorally, in the Squares movements, etc.

Dead Europe also handles the figure of the refugee well. There is a tendency to depict refugees as 'legitimate' only if they are 'nice' people who contribute to 'society' in some way. In contrast, the film doesn't flinch in showing unpleasant behaviour and attitudes from its refugee characters, but this is never used as an excuse to deny basic human dignities. The end of the film emphasises the agency of refugees, rather than portraying them as victims who can only be helped by charitable intervention.

Again, this is a great movie – watch it if you can!

anarchist & radical publications directory

WEBSITES

Anarchy.org.au

Your online source for Anarchy in Australia. Currently administered by the Melbourne Anarchist Club.

http://disaccords.wordpress.com/

An anarchist news blotter following events in Australia & Indonesia (& other nearby places). Email noisland [at] riseup [dot] net with links & recommendations.

http://funsomuch.tumblr.com/

Sydney-based posterboard of news, events and callouts for solidarity.

PUBLICATIONS

Direct action

http://www.scribd.com/iwwaustralia

The voice of revolutionary unionism! Direct Action is the publication of the Industrial Workers of the World - Australian Regional Organising Committee. Winter 2012 edition now available.

The Wolves at the door

http://wolvesatthedoor.noblogs.org/

Irregular anarchist journal from Sydney. Issue #2 is now available. Contact thewolvesatthedoor[at]riseup[dot]net.

Black Light

http://anarchy.org.au/anarchist-texts/black_light_1/

Paper of the Melbourne Anarchist Club. Issue #1 'Anarchy and organisation' is now available. Contact blacklightzine[at] gmail[dot]com.

Brisbane From Below

http://brissol.wordpress.com/2011/06/22/from-below-volume-1/

Paper of Brisbane Solidarity Network. BSN 'are a network of disgruntled workers, out-of-workers and students who organise to contribute towards a non-hierarchical solidarity movement...' Visit the BSN website at http://www.solnet.co.nr.

Sedition

http://anarchy.org.au/sedition/

Sedition is a mutual collaboration between three geographically disparate Australian anarchist collectives; Melbourne Anarchist Club, the Jura collective from Sydney, and Organise!– the Adelaide anarchist communist group. Contact: seditionjournal[at]gmail[dot]com.

The Spectre/El Fantasma

http://spectrenewsletter.wordpress.com/

Monthly Newspaper of the International Co-ordination Against Multinational Policies (Observatorio Internacional Contra las Políticas de las Multinacionales).